

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00

AID-05 DPW-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /081 W

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R 280918Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8052

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 11097

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, VN, RP, UNHCR

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES

REF: (A) MANILA 10894, (B) MANILA 10781

BEGIN SUMMARY: UNCR REP (DHAR) INFORMED EMBASSY JULY 27
THAT ALL VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD BOATS HAVE BEEN PER-
MITTED ASHORE. DHAR ESTIMATES ABOUT 90 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
NEED TO BE INTERVIEWED AND SUGGESTS PROMPT PROCESSING BY
US AND OTHER EMBASSIES WILL MAKE GOP MORE DISPOSED TO ACCEPT
FUTURE REFUGEES. EMBASSY WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO
EXPEDITE THESE CASES. SINCE DHAR WILL BE LEAVING MANILA
END AUGUST, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH INSTRUCT US MISSION GENEVA
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TO URGE ON UNHCR CRITICAL NEED FOR HIS PROMPT REPLACEMENT.

1. EMBOFF MET WITH UNHCR REP DHAR JULY 27 FOR RUNDOWN ON HIS VISIT TO VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AT SUBIC OVER WEEKEND. ALL REFUGEES ARE ASHORE ALTHOUGH HANDLING HAS BEEN EXCEEDINGLY HAPHAZARD. FOR EXAMPLE, GROUP OF 14 (PARA 2 REFTEL A) WERE NOT EVEN IMMUNIZED PRIOR TO BEING ALLOWED ASHORE. DHAR BROUGHT THIS TO ATTENTION OF GOP AUTHORITIES AND OMISSION HAS BEEN RECTIFIED. DFA'S CLAIM THAT 31 REFUGEES WHO LANDED ON MINDORO WISH TO LEAVE PHILIPPINES WAS TOTALLY INCORRECT AND BASED ON ERRONEOUS INFORMATION FROM PHIL MIL LIAISON OFFICER AT SUBIC. INDEED, MINDORO REFUGEE GROUP TRYING TO SELL THEIR BOAT AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING.

2. SITUATION AT DFA LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED. WORKING LEVEL WANTS TO BE HELPFUL BUT IS HANDICAPPED BY INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION WITH PHIL MIL AUTHORITIES AT SUBIC. THEY COMMUNICATE BY COMMERCIAL TELEGRAMS. THUS, DHAR HAD TO TELL DFA OF ARRIVAL OF LATEST BOATLOAD OF REFUGEES JULY 23. MOREOVER, WORKING LEVEL ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF DESIRE OF TOP DFA OFFICIALS (PARTICULARLY FOR-SEC ROMULO AND UNDERSECRETARY COLLANTES) TO TIGHTEN UP AND LIQUIDATE PROBLEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; IF NEED BE, BY DIRECTING GOP ARMED FORCES TO WARN REFUGEE SHIPS FROM PHILIPPINE WATERS. BEGIN FYI - DHAR SAID GOP VESSELS AS WELL AS FISHING BOATS, ETC., HAVE BEEN MOST HELPFUL IN DIRECTING REFUGEE VESSELS TO PORTS. END FYI.

3. DHAR IS CONCERNED AT TIME REQUIRED FOR U.S. AS WELL AS OTHER EMBASSY OFFICIALS TO INTERVIEW REFUGEES TO DETERMINE THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION. HE ESTIMATES THERE IS NOW BACKLOG OF 90. HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF ONE CONSULAR OFFICER COULD BE DESIGNATED TO HANDLE THESE CASES FULL TIME. DHAR REASONS THAT IF GOP IS AWARE U.S. AND OTHER EMBASSIES WILL ACT QUICKLY ON THESE CASES, IT IS MORE LIKELY TO BE COOPERATIVE WHEN IT COMES TO OTHER REFUGEES WHO WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ARRIVE BY BOAT IN FUTURE. AN ADDITIONAL "CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURE," DHAR SUGGESTED USG SHOULD BE MORE ACCOMMODATING AS FAR AS BORDERLINE

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CASES CONCERNED. HE AHS MADE SAME PITCH TO DCM PREVIOUSLY. EMBOFF COUNTERED THAT U.S. HAD DONE MORE THAN ITS SHARE. WHAT WAS REQUIRED WAS MORE "ACCOMMODATION" FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. BEGIN FYI - DHAR STATED FLATLY CANADIANS AND AUSTRALIANS HAVE BEEN BIG DISAPPOINTMENT AND ONLY FRENCH HAVE BEEN HELPFUL. END FYI.

4. DHAR REVEALED HIS ASSIGNMENT TERMINATES AT END OF

AUGUST. HE WILL BE REVERTING TO INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE. EMBOFF ASKED WOULD HE BE REPLACED. HE THOUGHT SO BUT WILL DISCUSS REPLACEMENT WITH GENEVA IN AUGUST. DHAR SUGGESTED IT WOULD NOT BE AMISS FOR USMISSION TO LET UNHCR KNOW WE HOPED HE WOULD BE REPLACED AND THAT THERE WOULD BE MINIMAL HIATUS BETWEEN HIS DEPARTURE AND HIS SUCCESSOR'S ARIVAL.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE AUSTERE PERSONNEL SITUATION IN CONSULAR SECTION, EMBASSY WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO EXPEDITE BOAT REFUGEE CASES. DHAR HAS PROMISED FULL COOPERATION. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO INSTRUCT USMISSION GENEVA TO APPROACH UNHCR ABOUT CRITICAL NEED FOR PROMPT REPLACEMENT FOR DHAR AND EXPRESS HOPE SUCCESSOR WILL BE AS ENERGETIC AND SCRUPULOUS IN PROTECTING REFUGEES' INTERESTS AS DHAR HAD BEEN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANILA11097
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760291-0717
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760714/aaaaalvn.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MANILA 10894, 76 MANILA 10781
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES
TAGS: CASC, SREF, VN, RP, UNHCR
To: STATE BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006